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The Church & the Clergy at this Time of War

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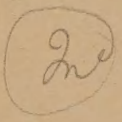

The Church & the Clergy at this Time of War

Theology

The Church & the Clergy at this Time of War

Being a Charge delivered to the Clergy of the Diocese assembled in the Minster of York on February 14 *&* 15, 1916, *by*

Cosmo Gordon Lang, D.D., D.C.L.
Archbishop of York

S.P.C.K.
Northumberland Avenue, London
1916

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Note

THESE Addresses were spoken at a Solemn Assembly of the Clergy of the Diocese of York, summoned to consider, in an atmosphere of united prayer and waiting upon God, the ministry of the Church and specially of the clergy at this solemn moment in the history both of the Church and of the nation. They are printed primarily for the use of those to whom they were spoken, as a memorial of a singularly impressive occasion. The venerable Dean of York has asked to be allowed to bear the cost of sending a copy of them to each of the clergy of the diocese. I have yielded to his most kind wish, because I know that the clergy would value as I do this special link with the Minster and with the Dean who for thirty-six years has loved and served it.

With some reluctance, but in deference to many requests, I have consented to the publication of the Addresses in a way which may make a wider circulation possible. Perhaps they may have a place in the preparation of the Church for the national mission to which it has now been called. C. E.

THE Services at this Solemn Assembly were as follows :—

On Monday, February 14, Evening Prayer at 6 P.M., at which the special Lessons were Malachi iii. 1-7 and Acts ii. 1-22, followed by an address and by a service of penitence and of preparation for Holy Communion.

On Tuesday, February 15, Holy Communion at 8.45 A.M., at which the Epistle and Gospel were 2 Corinthians iv. 1-12 and St. John xxi. 15-18; Morning Prayer at 11 A.M., at which the special Lessons were Isaïah vi. 1-9 and Acts i. 6-12, followed by an address and by a short service of intercession and thanksgiving.

The Psalms appointed for the fourteenth evening and the fifteenth morning of the month were very appropriate.

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The Church & the Clergy at this Time of War

BRETHREN IN THE LORD,—I have ventured to summon you to this solemn assembly because God has summoned you to fulfil your ministry at a time of unspeakable solemnity in the history of our nation, and, indeed, of the human race, a time when an old world is being sifted by the winnowing fan of God's judgment, and a new world is coming to birth in the travail pangs of war. Solemn always it is to be set among our fellowmen as messengers, stewards, and watchmen of the Lord. Beyond all words it is solemn at such a time as this. I thank you with all my heart for your willing response to my summons. Judging from the latest returns, 580 clergy of the diocese are present. Those who are absent are either serving with the forces as chaplains, whom we shall specially remember, or are prevented by illness or other urgent cause, and have been excused by me. So far as I know, not one single clergyman has ignored the summons, and only one is absent for a reason which I cannot regard as a sufficient excuse. That

practically 600 clergy of the diocese should have been assembled is a moving token not only of your loyalty, but also of your deep and anxious desire not to fail at this mighty time the Lord Who has called you to His service.

Eighteen months ago, when the war broke in upon our quiet lives, our first care was to be sure as Christian men, as Christian priests, that the Christian conscience could rightly accept the challenge. An instinct, which our very faith in God justified, compelled us to believe that, bad as war must always be, it would be worse to stand aside and see a great wrong done, the liberties of Europe trampled under foot, and an insolent claim that might was the only source of right triumph. We threw ourselves ardently into the task of rousing so far as we could the spirit of the nation in a rightful cause. We bade our people turn in prayer to the God of our fathers. But, since then, just as we have come to see that the war is a more terrible ordeal, that it is making a more exacting moral demand upon the nation than we foresaw, so also we have come to see more clearly that vaster issues are within it than the mere struggle between the allied nations and the power of the German Empire. We have come to see that a great

day of judgment is upon us, one of those great and terrible days of the Lord whose place in God's ordering of human history the prophets of old were sent forth to show. Plainly God's judgments are in all the earth that the inhabitants of the world may learn righteousness. As in a thunderstorm the flash of lightning will in a moment, with startling clearness, open the whole face of the landscape, so, in this thunderstorm of nations, the fire of war has laid bare the sins of a century of boasted civilisation. The selfishness, the self-assertion of individuals, of classes, of nations is being revealed and thereby judged. This is what it comes to in the last resort. We see its naked wrong and ruin. But through judgment there ever comes to those who have faith in God the hope of redemption. 'When these things begin to come to pass look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draweth nigh.' Already, in the new sense of fellowship, in the spirit of self-sacrifice, we can see, as it were, the dawn-streaks of a better day, the promise of a new coming of the Kingdom of God. Alike in judgment, therefore, and in redemption the Son of Man is being manifested, condemning the sins of an old world, revealing the hopes of a new. It is one of the days of the Son of Man. We are living

in it. We are set within it to be His witnesses, His heralds, to prepare the way of His coming —yes, to be messengers, stewards, and watchmen of the Lord *now*. Dear brethren, how little we could foresee on that morning of our Ordination, fresh or far back in our memories, that we were destined to such a call as this! Our hearts shrink as we realise how unready we are. Knowing ourselves as we do, our dullness, our tiredness, our poverty of thought, our slowness of speech, we tremble at the contrast between the men we are and the greatness of the call. Plainly, it is not the men we are who can rise to obey it. The men we are must cease to be. We must be re-made, baptised with the fire of the Spirit, purging our sins, filling our dull minds with new light and our weak wills with new strength, touching our stammering lips with a live coal from the altar of God. There is nothing for it at such a time, in the face of such a call, but to throw ourselves upon God.

That is the motive and the meaning of this assembly. It must needs be a great event in the history of this diocese. It must surely be a great event in the life history of each one of us. We have been reminded this evening of another event in the history of the Church, when a company of frail and humble men

assembled to prepare for their call to be witnesses of Christ at an even greater time, when an old world was ending and a new world was coming. 'They were all together in one place . . . and they were filled with the Holy Spirit.' We are all together, Bishops and clergy, assembled in one felt and visible brotherhood of disciples. We are in one place, this Mother Church of ours, bringing back to me the memory of the day, seven years ago, when, in fear and trust, I was set in the seat of rule as your Father in God, bringing back to many of you the memory of your Ordination, speaking to all of us of the things which, amid the shaking of the world's powers, cannot be shaken. Here all together in one place we are waiting to claim the promise of the Father, to open our tired souls and perplexed minds to the coming of the Holy Ghost.

I beseech you, let us put away from our minds during this time anything which would come between us and the waiting Spirit of God. Lay aside for a time all care for the homes and the work that you have left. God will take care of them in your absence. You will not dwell upon any inconveniences you may have suffered in weather, or travelling, or in the arrangements made for your housing or your placing in this church. Above all, let me

earnestly ask you not to hinder God's work by thinking critically of the words that I shall speak. Truly, if you had been summoned merely to hear a charge from me you might well go away disappointed. But, as we have come to wait together upon God, your only interest in my words will be whether in any of them you can hear the voice of God speaking to your own souls. If there were anywhere in this large assembly one man remaining detached, critical, discontented, he might be a hindrance to God's work among his brethren. Let us help one another by keeping this evening, to-morrow morning, and at our closing service in the same atmosphere of Godward desire and expectation. Let us all be 'in the Spirit' on this great Lord's Day.

There are three words which may serve to summarise what I desire to say to you about our ministry at this time of war, and to unite our thoughts in the three stages of our assembly. They are *Repentance, Renewal,* and *Rebuilding*. Of repentance we shall think to-night; for renewal we shall meet to-morrow morning; to rebuilding we shall be called at our closing service.

Repentance

I

Repentance

And first *Repentance*. If we are to go down to our parishes from the temple justified, the cry of each one of us must be 'God be merciful to me, a sinner.' And truly it is a cry which must arise from our hearts as we watch the awful spectacle of God's judgment falling to-day upon the nations of Europe. What has failed, what has proved its failure by this pitiful ruin of war, is precisely not the sovereign will of God, precisely not that will revealed in Jesus Christ, but a civilisation which had ignored the law of fellowship of man with God and with his fellowmen which Christ came to manifest and to sustain. If the spirit of Christ had in any way really moved and inspired the professedly Christian nations of Europe, this war would have been impossible.

But how did Christ mean His Spirit to reach and mould the spirit of the nations? Was it not, in His wonderful plan—shall I dare to say His supreme venture?—of trusting to the humanity He had redeemed, that His Spirit should influence the nations through

His Body, the Church? So we come back to ourselves. Our chief concern here and now is not with the failure of the nations, but with the failure of the Church. If God's judgments are in all the earth must they not begin with the House of God? It is not, I repeat, Christianity that has failed. Christ's message, Christ's example, Christ's spirit are still—and the war has only made the truth more plain—the one hope of civilisation. It is not Christianity, it is the Church, in its human aspect as an institution, that has failed.

Its failure is not, primarily, that it has not converted the nations. Our Lord did not commission it to win this kind of success. He commissioned His Church to be a witness to Him on earth. The failure of the Church is its failure, with truth and clearness and power, to give this witness. Its life has not manifested Christ among men.

Let us think only of our own branch of the Church in which we have been sent to serve. What was the witness which the Church of England was giving to the nation when the war broke out? Was it that of a fellowship uniting all classes and all its members in loyalty to the will of Christ, and in close brotherliness one with another? Consider briefly only four points. (1) 'The

Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost.' Was the Church of England giving witness to Christ's Passion for the souls of men? Were we really as a body in town, yes and in country, ceaselessly thinking, praying, toiling for the great majority of English people who stand outside any open acknowledgment of Christ? If I may use, with apology, common phrases, were not Evangelical and Catholic clergy too often content to give their own congregations 'sound Evangelical teaching' or 'full Catholic privileges,' and to forget, in the care of the ten sheep who were safe, the ninety who were wandering without a shepherd? Were the congregations, settled in their accustomed places, filled with a sense of their calling, as members of Christ's body, to be companies of missioners for His cause? God forbid that I should seem to belittle the sacred duty of building men up in the faith. This ought we to have done, but not so as to leave undone the equally sacred duty of seeking the careless, of perfecting the saints, not for their own good only, but for the work of ministering to others.

(2) 'The Son of Man was manifested that He might destroy the works of the Devil.' So we are reminded in the Collect for this week. Was the Church of England foremost in its

witness to Christ by wrestling with the sins of the nation and the wrongs of its social life? Think of the dark features of our social order, such as the condition of our slums, the poverty of life and outlook in our villages, the waste in body and soul of intemperance, the ravages of lust, the exploiting of unorganised labour, and the like. Could it be said that it was always in the clergy and laity of the National Church that the nation saw the most fearless and resolute champions of the Kingdom of God?

(3) The Master said: 'By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another.' Was this witness shining in the life of the Church of England? Did not our own party controversies darken the witness of visible fellowship to the presence and power of Christ? We think with shame of the bitterness of our secular party-spirit before the war. We have a deep desire that when the war is over it shall not again poison the springs of our national life. Must we not think with even greater shame of our ecclesiastical party-spirit, and confront the memory of it with a like desire for the future of the Church? Thank God we were escaping from it in this diocese. Nothing has given me more encouragement during the last seven years than the manifold tokens that here at least men of all

parties were increasingly holding together in the corporate work of the Church. But the history of the Church of England, as a whole, in the last fifty years, has scarcely exhibited that fellowship of mutual love which would make men feel that Christ was with us because we were brothers in Him. It is not that the matters of our controversies are trivial. But the place we have given to these controversies, the spirit in which we have waged them, have made men think that the Church was a body wrapped up in interests which had no concern with the great needs of human life. At a time when the very excesses of selfish competition were filling thoughtful men with a real longing for spiritual fellowship, they failed to see it just where Christ meant it to shine.

(4) Another sign of the failure of witness has been that the Church has largely failed to attract to itself new and eager religious aspirations. 'Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven.' Have men seen and been attracted by that light in us? I believe that seldom, if ever, has there been among thinking men of all classes a deeper sense of the need of religion than in these recent years when many of the hopes and promises of the nineteenth century were being

proved to be illusions. Yet, somehow, it has not been to the Church of England as an institution that their wistful eyes have turned. They have found it dull, conventional, spiritless, without life or power or peace or joy and they have often gone on their quest elsewhere. I am thinking not only of what are called educated men and women, but of great masses of thoughtful working men eager to find a religion to justify and sustain their aspirations for a truer common life. How many of the men—would God there were more!—who are trying to bring the spirit of religion into our great trade unions are faithful members of the Church of England? And even now, when the war has finally torn the illusions from our secular civilisation, when war with its anxieties, its sorrows, its sacrifices has made plain to men and women everywhere the need of God, has the Church at once sprung to the forefront of its opportunity? Let me put the question in the searching words of the Bishop of Stepney: 'We know so well what is wanted; the very thing which the Church professes to be able to supply, the thing which in some vague and general sense the Church believes to be its heritage, its dower, its very reason of existence. Not lost, no, only mislaid; not lost, only just now we cannot lay

hand upon it: the love by which men are to know that we are His disciples; the unity which will make the world believe that the Father sent the Son to be its Saviour; the voice and the utterance that unbelief can neither gainsay nor resist; the fellowship which is worth having, for truly it is with the Father and the Son; the love and joy and peace that are the fruit of the indwelling Spirit. Of course, they are ours; all things are ours; and "we are Christ's and Christ is God's." Yet when we want them for ourselves and for a world that solely needs and honestly asks for them, can we really give them?'*

Thank God there is another and a brighter side to the picture. We know that thousands of her children find in their Mother Church the strength of truth, the joy of grace, the home of their souls. I doubt if ever at any great time in English history, there has flowed through the Church a deeper stream of prayer. I doubt whether at any period in the history of this diocese there could have been an assembly of its clergy more honestly filled with a sincere desire to be faithful priests and messengers of Christ. But on this searching day of the Lord we want to see things as they are. Any spirit of self-satisfaction, any readi-

* "Studies in Revival," p. 8.

ness to make excuses ought to be almost as impossible as they would be on the final Day of Judgment. Let us get rid, dear brothers, of all traces of self-complacency, that most deadly sin of the Church, the blight which withers every hope of revival. 'From all blindness and hardness of heart, good Lord deliver us.'

And now let me ask what are the causes of this failure? Many answers spring at once to our mind and to our conscience. But I will only ask you to think of one cause which lies behind all the others. Let me call it *failure of spirit*. By failure of spirit I mean reluctance or refusal to be guided, quickened, empowered by the Spirit of God. Hear the words of our Lord's charge to His Church: 'Ye shall receive power when the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and ye shall be my witnesses.' It was in the power of the Spirit that the witness was to be given. Without that power the witness must needs fail. The power is ever ready, assured to us, so that we can at any moment claim it. But the Spirit will never force Himself. He waits until men open themselves to receive Him, and offer themselves to follow Him. But His demands are very exacting. He rebukes all self-conceit, all trust in our own plans and powers.

He bids us choose between Him and the comforts to which we cling, the life of ease to which we are prone, the resentments and quarrels which we think are just, the popularity which we wish to enjoy, the secret sins which we would fain both leave and keep. He summons us to be ever rising in spiritual desire, ever aiming at the level of Christ's life. From these demands, because they are so exacting, the natural man shrinks. Above all, when we are tired by work, depressed by disappointment, soured it may be by supposed neglect, querulous perhaps about the conditions of our life and work, in one single significant word, dispirited, then we refuse the venture. We will not be led by the Spirit, and so we fail. The lamp of witness goes out.

Therefore I will ask you, before we part, as Bishops and clergy of the diocese, to make with me a solemn act of penitence. God alone knows the secret of our hearts and the story of our ministry, and therefore in silence each will make his own confession before we join in a corporate act of penitence. Then, as your Father in God, in the name of Christ, I will give to all who thus truly and earnestly repent His message of absolution: 'Thy sins be forgiven thee; go in peace.'

Renewal

II

Renewal

Now, for help and hope, remember that repentance is the way to renewal; for it opens an entry to the Spirit of Him Who maketh all things new. I read the other day a saying of the late Lord Kelvin that when a man is face to face with his great difficulty he is on the eve of his great discovery. If we have realised that what is chiefly wrong with us, and wrong with the Church, is failure of instinctive response to the Spirit of God, then the discovery of what beyond all else we need is near. Is it not the discovery that we must resolutely and persistently obey the motions of the Spirit of God? There is no need for us to wait for any awe-compelling sign of His coming. The gift of the Spirit's power is assured to us by the laying on of hands. The humblest of us, if he will only respond to that power, may be himself a man of power. If each one in this great company were simply to go back to his diocese, his parish, resolved that whenever he hears the Spirit of God speaking to him in the depths of his own true self he will at once rise and follow, that he will claim

beforehand for every sermon, sacrament, service, visit, the power of the Spirit, then a witness would shine for Christ in the darkness of this time of war, and a wonderful wave of blessing would pass over this diocese.

The chief office, my brothers, of the Holy Spirit is to perfect our union with Christ. Let us then in reliance upon the Spirit bring this deep desire of renewal to our Eucharist to-morrow morning. I shrink from putting into words all that that Eucharist may mean for us, for the Church in this diocese, lest we should prove to be unworthy of it. Never, I imagine, in all the almost 1,300 years during which this Minster has uplifted to God the worship of His Church, has 'the whole clergy' of the diocese in anything like the same numbers assembled at its altar. It will be indeed a corporate Communion in a sense which that phrase can rarely have. For in it the whole priesthood of the diocese will, through the Bishop, celebrate the sacred mysteries. All other Eucharists throughout the diocese will be gathered up within it. Let it mean to each one of us all that our chiefest privilege as priests has ever meant in our best and highest moments. Use the quiet of this evening, when you return, to make your preparation for it. Let us ask the

Holy Spirit to help us so that with reverent faith we may effectually offer for our country, for our Church, for the world in this day of crisis, the sacred memorial of the Lord's redeeming Passion; that we may pledge ourselves afresh to fellowship with His sacrifice; that we may verily and indeed receive His most sacred Body and His most precious Blood. Let us pray that to-morrow, to use the old and simple words, the whole clergy of the diocese may 'make a good Communion.' Then as men renewed by Christ's holy and life-giving Presence, no longer with doubt and fear, but with faith and hope, we can go forward to face the unspeakable responsibility of our ministry at this time of war.

Rebuilding

III

Rebuilding

Tuesday, February 15th, 1916.

DEAR BROTHERS IN THE LORD,—We are waiting upon God at this supreme moment in the history of our ministry. Last night we tried to bring to Him an offering of our repentance. This morning, in Holy Communion, we have, I hope, found strength and hope of renewal. I bid you treasure in your memories your communion on this fifteenth day of February in the year of our Lord—truly and specially a year of our Lord —1916. Raise it in your remembrance as one of the great waymarks of your ministry. Let it stand as a new pledge of our loyalty to Christ and to one another. In after days of reaction or depression look back to it and take courage. Strengthened then by this renewal of the Spirit, let us with hope and resolution face the task which is so plainly laid upon us of rebuilding the life of ourselves, of the Church, and of the nation. 'Yet once more will I make to tremble not the earth only, but also the heaven. And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those

things that are shaken . . . that those things which are not shaken may remain. Wherefore, receiving a Kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us have grace, whereby we may offer service well-pleasing to God with reverence and awe.' (Heb. xii. 26-29.) These words interpret the present world-wide crisis, and show our duty as God's messengers. In the midst of the shaking of nations, of old hopes and ideals, our task is to re-build human life on the one foundation which is laid, and which cannot be shaken—Jesus Christ and His Kingdom.

i. The first beginning must be with *ourselves*. We must rebuild our own lives. They cannot go on just as they were; just as if August 1914 had never occurred in their history. The solemnity of this assembly is meant to impress upon our consciences and imaginations that in our lives and ministry a great event has occurred, a great moment has come. I hope that it will be impossible for me or for any of you to return from it to the old routine of our lives. I do not wish to use rhetorical language, but surely it is sober truth to say that to decline in this unparalleled time to make some fundamental change of life would be indeed 'the great refusal' by which the whole course of man's after life is judged.

It would be failure to know the supreme time of our visitation. God will show to each man's conscience where his own life's rebuilding must begin. But, if last night we were right in thinking that one of the main causes of our failure in the old days to witness to Christ was failure of spirit, failure to follow and rely upon the Holy Spirit of God, so for almost all of us the rebuilding must begin in the strengthening of the spirit, in turning from trust, and—yes—distrust, in ourselves to a more perfect trust in the Spirit of God. The fundamental change we need, the change which will carry all other needed changes with it, is, so to say, a change in the pivot of our lives. Their direction is too much self-ward, or work-ward. We must turn it God-ward. That is what men mean when sometimes, in answer to the question 'What is the first essential to the revival of the Church?' I have heard them say, 'The conversion of the clergy.' Put thus bluntly the word is, we know, one-sided, almost unjust; but does it not, my brothers, speak a real truth? We cannot lead our people, or the nation, towards God unless we ourselves are really and wholly set that way; in fact, as well as in profession, 'men of God.' It is our business to bear witness to the first things in human life. We

must in our own lives be always putting first things first. I would wish one of the abiding memories then of this assembly to be the call to hold ourselves more steadily, more simply, more whole-heartedly open to the motions of the Holy Spirit of God. This will mean for many of you who are country clergy—let me say it with heartfelt sympathy gained through my visitation of your parishes—a new inward energy. It will mean letting the Spirit of God lift you out of the somewhat desultory drift into which the week-days are apt to fall, letting Him fill you with more concentrated purpose, calling you to fresh adventures of ministry. It will mean for many of you who are town clergy rather a readjustment of energy; letting the Holy Spirit turn you from outward activity and work and its organisation to inward activity of the soul. It will mean for all of us caring more for our own souls, holding steadfastly to the times of personal prayer, of personal meditation on the Word of God, resolving once a year to go apart into retreat, to make sure, as the years pass, of our own personal hold upon Christ. We must live as if we really knew that the best and most active part of our work, the part upon which all others depend, is that which is done upon our knees. To be living in and working through

the Spirit of God—that is the sovereign protection against sloth or busy-ness, worldliness, querulousness, self-esteem or depression; all the mists which blur the shining of our witness. Let us then go forth to rebuild our lives from within.

ii. Secondly, there must be a *rebuilding of the Church*. I must, perforce, for reasons of time, as last night, think only of that branch of the Church wherein we serve. Here also things manifestly cannot go on as they were before the war. During, and still more after, such a time as this there must be changes profound and far-reaching. The greatest things indeed cannot be shaken. It is a source of strength, even of tranquility in a time of anxiety, for which we cannot be too thankful, to remember that nothing can affect the primary trust of the Church—to bear witness to the unchanging Christ. When other men are perplexed and anxious and are crying 'What shall we do?' we here assembled know one sufficient and inspiring answer—at all times, in all circumstances to bear witness to the living Christ. Nor can we alter, even if we would, the secondary trust of bearing witness to Christ as He is taught in the creeds, as He is given in the sacraments, as He works through the order which we have received and

by which, among Christian communities, we stand. But in the presentation of the unchanging Christ, in the interpretation of the creeds, in the mode of administering the sacraments and in the adaptation of order to the new world there must needs be many changes. What they will be we cannot yet clearly see. We do not know what the moral and spiritual needs created by the ordeal of war will be. But already we can see some at least of the lines which the rebuilding of the Church must follow. This is not the time or place to speak of changes which affect the outward organisation of the Church, striking and perhaps unexpected as some of them may be. I can only speak to you of those which affect our own ministry within it.

(1) First, the war has stirred up a new sense of reality in prayer. Perplexed and disappointed we have sometimes and in some places been by the seeming heedlessness of many of our people to the call to public prayer. Yet, once again, I make bold to say that probably never before, certainly within recent centuries, have there been so many people in our churches really praying, not merely listening to prayers recited in their hearing, but themselves feeling and joining in them. The names read in church of men dear to them or

known to them in daily life have often, for the first time, made men and women feel that the Church prayers touched the real life of their hearts and homes. Certainly thousands, often unknown to us, are praying as they never prayed before. We must, at all costs, keep this atmosphere of reality, of contact with the real lives and concerns of the people, in our public prayer. We cannot return to the old, unvarying, often mechanical, recitation of set prayers as the only outlet of common needs and desires. Moreover, remember that ere long multitudes of men will be returning who knew what common prayer meant, when comrades stood together face to face with the awful realities of war. Will they endure the old unbending rigour in our parish churches? You will always find me willing to encourage liberty of prayer consistent with reverence, with fitness of time and place, with due liturgical order and with the teaching embodied in the Book of Common Prayer. And yet, after all, much can be done not only by new types of service, but by putting a spirit of reality into the old. A unique chance is given us to teach our people to pray. If we are to use it aright we must be ourselves scholars in the school of prayer. We must enrich our own prayers, deepen their intensity, widen

their scope. We must regard prayer as a real active, purposeful part of our ministry to which we give some of the best of our thought and of our time. Our own life of prayer will breathe reality into the appointed services; and, oh that we might be given resources of imagination and persuasion to make it natural, even for English people, to come into the stillness of their parish churches at any time to lay before the Lord their needs, their sorrows, their anxieties, and their desires!

The spirit of reality in prayer! Yes, and the same spirit of reality in *worship*. It is this spirit of worship which somehow has been lacking in the ordinary services of the Church of England. They seem so often rather the performance of a pious duty than a means by which men rise into felt communion with the Eternal. I am sure that just in so far as the anxieties, sorrows, and awful issues of this time of war open in the hearts of men a sense of the need of God, so, in the worship of our churches they will yearn for something that speaks of a God, Who, while He draws their hearts upwards to Him, comes Himself down to meet them. Is not this just to say that in the Eucharist the spirit of worship is most fully alike aroused and satisfied? We must try everywhere, patiently, gently, hopefully,

to restore that holy service to its rightful place as the central act of the Church's worship. Would that we could lift this great matter out of the region of doctrinal or ritual controversy! Only let the Eucharist everywhere be celebrated with awe and reverence, and with the sense that great and holy things are being done, and then, however simple its ritual may be, it will not fail to appeal as no other service can to the hearts of men and women yearning in the stress of this anxious time for communion with a living and personal God. I wish that those who have been specially of recent years trying to make the Eucharist the chief service of the Lord's Day had not chosen an hour when it must be largely deprived of that element of the communion of the people which is essential to the fulness of its truth and beauty. Is it too much to hope that among the changes in the time coming will be these two—one, that an hour may be chosen late enough for tired workers and early enough for those who wish to keep the Church's ancient principle of fasting, when the whole society of Christ in the parish may make their united act of worship and of communion; the other, that even those to whom worship is not less true because it is simple may unite with those to whom worship is

helped by art and solemn ritual in making the Holy Communion, as in the first days, the great act of corporate fellowship and worship. Forgive me for saying so much. But I am convinced that here there must be a rebuilding of the Church if it is to remain the spiritual home of multitudes who, in times of strain and anxiety, long for a worship which will lift them into communion with the things that are unseen and eternal.

(2) Again, in regard to *teaching*, no less than in regard to the spirit of worship, there is need of rebuilding in the Church. Let me use one forceful proof of the need. We hear that many men in our armies are being turned towards God. We must not exaggerate, but no one can doubt the reality of the evidence. Yet, with one accord, our Chaplains lament that the men professedly belonging to the Church of England whose hearts are touched are extraordinarily ignorant of what the Christian faith really is, and of the ways and habits of religion in which it should be expressed. Men have been touched, but they remain untaught. God knows how earnestly we desire that the impressions received in the present time of war shall not be lost in the dangerous reaction of peace. But these impressions, if they are to last, must become

convictions. They must be translated into habits of religion. They must be fulfilled in the active fellowship of the Church. There is a real danger that the new movement towards God on all sides may drift into a vague religiousness, dependent on the fitful chances of emotion, and without strength and stability. Therefore, the teaching office of the Church must be revived. But the teaching must be very different from the kind too often given. It must be instinct with life and reality; spoken in a language that men know and use, related to the concrete needs of their lives, and commending itself to their consciences. Such teaching can only come from men who are themselves mastering their subject by daily reading and thinking. The builders in this rebuilding must be students; their bricks and mortar must be books; books which bring the reader into touch with great minds, and, above all, the books of God's library—the Bible.

(3). Once again, the witness of the Church to its Lord in the life of the nation, of whose weakness, last night, we made our humble confession, has been weak largely because it has not been the witness of the whole body. Somehow in past years we have not succeeded in making the Church of England a real

fellowship of common service. Its members are recipients, more or less thankful, of its privileges. They are not, as a body, partners in its responsibilty. You know that one of the aims of my Visitation of your parishes has been to impress upon the laity that to them, just as really as to the clergy, the cause of Christ, of His faith and of His Kingdom, has been entrusted. I know that there are thousands of laymen sincerely devoted to the Church, anxious to serve it. But they lack two things. They lack leadership, such as the clergy alone can give them, keen, resourceful, and trustful; and they lack direction, summons clear and sustained to some of the enterprises within the great adventure of the Church. When the memories are still fresh of a time when the enthusiasm of service to the nation has been so widely stirred, and the spirit of adventure has sent thousands of men to the war, we shall surely have an atmosphere in which with new hope we can strive to make even our old Church everywhere a company of adventurers for the Cross and the Kingdom of the Lord. Days are coming after the war when new problems, social and industrial, will confront us, when a new challenge will be given to the nation whether it is to go on acquiescing in the evils of drink and lust and

degrading poverty. In these coming days I am certain that the Church will be strong to speak and act for Christ just in proportion as all its members are filled with the sense of a corporate mission.

The rebuilding of the Church! How many other visions and hopes the words call up! But at least in these three ways, giving reality to prayer and to worship, teaching the faith patiently and vividly, strengthening the sense of corporate mission for Christ, we can go forth to take our share in that rebuilding.

iii. Thirdly, the *rebuilding of the nation.* Truly the theme is as vast as it is inspiring. You will not expect me at the close of an address which has already unduly taxed your attention to do more than touch the borders of it. I shall speak of it only in so far as it leads up to the call which will be at once the ending of our assembly here and the beginning of a new effort in our ministry when we leave.

There is not one of us who does not, with his whole soul, hope and pray that the issue of this great Day of Destruction may be the rebuilding of our land and Empire upon nobler and truer lines. Let us admit at once that such a hope demands some courage. The record of the after days of other great wars is not encouraging. We can already see shadows

thrown before of vast and dark problems moving behind the field of war, ready to come forth when the armies have left it. There are moments when one thinks that the dangers of war may prove less fearful than the dangers even of a victorious peace. The choice is thrust upon all of us between the courage of hope and a doubt which is not far from despair. To the Christian, the choice which he must make is plain.

But the venture has its reasonable grounds. Of these the chief is the force of appeal in the sacrifices of brave lives which have been offered. It will be a debt resting upon the heart and conscience of the nation, which surely it will be ready to honour, to see that these sacrifices shall not have been made in vain. But in vain, or at least robbed of their due reward, they will be if all they achieve—and God grant they may achieve that!—is the defeat of Germany. Our sailors and soldiers are fighting against an evil spirit, and we owe it to them that we shall strive to banish all traces of that spirit from our national life. For this, defeat of the enemy will not suffice. The coming of peace will not suffice. Nothing but the coming of a changed heart and a new spirit will suffice. The winning of a nobler spirit will be the true and only lasting

winning of the war. Let us remember our Lord's warning, which we may fitly paraphrase for the nation: 'When the evil spirit is gone out of a nation it walketh abroad seeking rest and finding none. Then it saith, I will return unto my house from whence I came out, and when it is come it findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. Then goeth he and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there, and the last state of that nation is worse than the first.' Nothing but the coming of a new spirit of fellowship, of mutual justice, considerateness, and service can save our civilisation. I am persuaded that the nation will shrink from allowing history to write this epitaph upon the graves of its noblest men: 'They died for their country; but they could not save it.' Surely we can rely upon this motive of honour to inspire the rebuilding of the nation.

If so, here is our great, our unexampled opportunity. For just in so far as men realise the need of the changed heart and the new spirit they will realise that it can only come from within, and from above; in other words, from religion. Are there not signs in the public mind of at least a new readiness for religion? Consider three of them. First,

before August 1914 it seemed difficult to get a hearing for the truth that 'man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God'; that is, not by the material only, but by the spiritual. Yet, then, some great words of God were heard—honour, justice, chivalry—and, as one man, the nation rose to the truth that in obedience to them—at whatever material cost—lay its very life. Never before have we messengers of God had such a response to the text, which is one of the first words of religion—'What shall it profit a man (or a nation), if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?'

Secondly, in the old world before the war the mass of men contentedly believed in civilisation in itself, as if it had a kind of Divine right of progress. It was a belief, indeed, which was very unsuccessfully justifying itself in fact, and doubts were becoming rife. But still in the press, on the platform, in the common speech of men, in the hearts of those who listened to us Sunday after Sunday, the old creed was repeated, 'We believe in science, in education, in commercial prosperity, and if there be one God, these are His prophets.' And now a spectacle, a portent, is disclosed of a nation foremost in the application of science, in the ordering of educa-

tion, in the development of trade and commerce, ruthlessly plunging Europe into war, and waging the war with every resource alike of savagery and science. Wherever there is a public conscience it is shocked. 'So this is what comes of a civilisation that forgets God!' This shock of conscience must surely force open the door to the claims of religion, of God. May we not expect—will it not be our fault if we do not secure?—a new acknowledgment of God in the home, in the schools, on the Lord's Day, in the common thoughts and habits of men?

Thirdly, already there are cheering tokens of the new spirit shining through the dark clouds which lie in judgment over the old civilisation. There is among us a new spirit of fellowship. It has still to struggle against lingering movements of the old spirit, but it is stronger, more widespread than we have perhaps ever known in the history of this nation. There is among us a new spirit of service. Tainted, it may be, with thoughts of profit; but it is filling every class, and both sexes, with a new sense that life is not worth living unless it brings itself somewhere and somehow to the service of the commonwealth. There is, above all, a new spirit of sacrifice, shown in the bravery and cheerfulness of

Navy and Army, in the conversion of homes into hospitals, in the willing acceptance of common burdens, of the strain and overtime of factories, in the noble bearing by wives and mothers of the loss of those who are dearer to them than life itself. Let no anxieties rob us of thankfulness for this revelation of response in the common heart to the claims of the Cross. For, dear brothers, fellowship, service, sacrifice, what are these but Jesus Christ? What are these but the very spirit of Him who is the Lord and Brother of men, Who came to draw them closer to God and to one another, Who is among them as one that serves, Who revealed the truth and won the redemption of their life upon the Cross of Calvary? Here is now our unexampled opportunity as the messengers and stewards and watchmen of the Lord. God grant us power to use it! Through this new sense of the values of life, this new recoil from a Godless civilisation, this new spirit of fellowship, service, and sacrifice, we have to prepare the way of the Lord. We have to make men see Christ coming to them in the revived spirit of the time. We have to tell men that He whom—whether they know it or not—they are worshipping is Jesus Christ, given of God to be the Saviour of the nations. The new spirit which men need is His. The

national life must be rebuilt upon this one foundation— Jesus Christ.

Beyond all question this is the Mission of Witness before the nation to which the Lord is now calling His Church. Plainly, it will have two main messages. It will be a message of repentance. Before the re-building can begin the broken rubble of the old building must be removed. Self-indulgence, self-assertion of individuals and classes, the neglect of God, His Day, His Word, His Law—these things must be got rid of. Mere regret will not do it. The only way of riddance is repentance. 'Turn yet, saith the Lord, from all your wickedness, and your sin shall not be your destruction. Cast away from you all your ungodliness that ye have done. Make you new hearts and a new spirit. Turn ye then and ye shall live.' A message of repentance—and a message of hope. The nation will need hope during the war to sustain it in the midst of growing anxiety and sacrifice and sorrow. When the war is over and the reaction sets in, and these hard problems which have been before our imagination begin to press, the nation will need hope more than ever, hope that there is a sovereign will of righteousness in the earth, that there is a city of God towards which it is worth while to strive. The Church

must, with strong faith and sure speech, point to Him Who laboured, suffered, died, but rose again, Who is 'the one hope of our poor wayward humanity.' How great a service to our country would ours be if in these anxious days that are coming men could say of us, the clergy of the Church:

> 'Beacons of hope ye appear!
> Langour is not in your heart,
> Weakness is not in your word,
> Weariness not on your brow. . . .
> Ye strengthen the wavering line,
> Stablish, continue our march
> On to the bound of the waste,
> On to the city of God.'

So then at this solemn time God is calling the Church to *a national mission of repentance and hope*. Brethren, these words will at once remind you that this call has now definitely come through the authority of the Archbishops, with the concurrence of the Bishops of the Church. We have decided, after much thought, to ask the Church to concentrate prayer and effort on this great united enterprise during the present year. I know that you in this Diocese will be loyal to this summons. You will believe that it has not

been made without a deep sense of responsibility. But in these times, when the spirit of a campaign is all around us, those to whom God gives a position of central responsibility must take the lead, and cannot leave it to perpetual discussion to decide upon the plan of campaign. I know that you will follow the lead thus authoritatively given. It is an enterprise which demands thorough and careful preparation first of the clergy, then of the laity. This is an essential part of the mission, for it is only through a Church made ready to act as one body that its message and its influence can touch the nation. The preparation must be long enough to be thorough, but short enough to be sustained. The culminating preaching of the mission must take place, unless God's Providence in some unexpected way makes this impossible, in the months of October and November next. We have decided to ask for this swift, sustained, concentrated effort because we know not what another year may bring forth, and because in this time of war the King's business requires haste. This is not the time or the place to speak of details. They have not yet been decided. They will soon be brought to each deanery and parish. As a sign that for this great effort

all other plans must be laid aside, I have decided, to my grievous disappointment, that after next month I must suspend my visitation of the Diocese. I shall hope, instead, during the spring and summer to confer with the clergy and to speak to Church people at some convenient centre in every Deanery. It is, therefore, to no mere vague desires, but to a definite and pressing work that I now send you forth. Let us be thankful that it is so. The danger of such a time of spiritual communion as we have spent together is that its sacred impressions may be dissipated before they can be concentrated on some active work. Otherwise I can well imagine how you might have returned from this inspiring assembly, and looking out upon the familiar streets, or the fields and homesteads, of your parishes, or meeting next Sunday your familiar flock, have wondered sadly how you were to begin, how you were to realise the hopes and visions of these solemn hours. But now in this mission you will have the call at once, with the sounds of our 'Veni Creator' ringing in your ears, to rebuild your own lives in dependence on the Spirit of God; at once to begin to rebuild the Church in your parishes by setting the people to prayer, by teaching

them the lessons of our holy faith, by gathering them around you as a body of missionary witnesses for Christ; at once to take your share in preparing the nation to rebuild its life on Christ.

Go forth, then, dear brothers, with loyalty and with courage. Throw all your renewed hope and zeal into this task. I was much struck by a prayer of which we were reminded at a recent meeting of Bishops for quiet devotion by the Bishop who addressed it. It was the prayer of Samson as he grasped the pillars of the house. 'O Lord God, remember me, I pray, and strengthen me, I pray Thee, only this once.' Let this be our prayer as we leave this Mother Church: 'O Lord God, strengthen us, we pray Thee, *only this once*!' Surely He will answer the prayer, for we have in this solemn time waited upon God, and 'they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.'

And so I bid you farewell. I thank you for the loyalty of your attendance, for the patience of your listening, above all, for the spirit of earnest devotion which you have put forth in our times of communion and of prayer. I would have, indeed, a heart of stone

if I could look unmoved upon this assembly of men whom God has given to be my comrades in His service. Believe me, it is from a heart, not of stone, but of trust and of affection, that I say, remembering all the manifold toil, in many cases the isolation and the discouragements to which you are returning, 'God bless you. God keep you. God strengthen you now and ever. Amen.'

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